

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application.

Applicant notes a newly cited reference, namely Lehtinen, which was used by the Examiner in the May 4, 2006 office action to make a rejection of several claims, including for the first time, a rejection of claim 14 which was not amended in response to the non-final office action of December 21, 2005. The newly cited reference of Lehtinen was applied by the Examiner against claim 14. Claim 14 was not previously rejected on the basis of the newly cited reference, nor was it amended. Accordingly, Applicant believes the finality of the office action to be unjustified, and requests reconsideration and a withdrawal of the finality of the May 4, 2006 office action. Applicant addresses the rejection with respect to Lehtinen, below.

The Examiner in the previous office action stated that certain features were not believed to be in the Applicant's claims, in particular in claim 1. The feature of having transport rollers on each side of the transport plane is believed to be clearly articulated in the Applicant's claims. Claim 1 recites:

b) transport drives associated with said rollers, wherein the elevations (7) on the first roller (1) of a pair of rollers located on one side of the plane of transportation (12) are staggered relative to the elevations (7) provided on the second roller (2) of the pair of rollers on the other side of the plane of transportation (12);

Applicant has amended claims 1, 14 and 17 to more particularly articulate the features of having a first roller disposed on one side of the plane of transportation, and having a second roller disposed on the other side of the plane of transportation. The amended claims read as follows:

wherein said pair of rollers includes at least one first roller located on one side of the plane of transportation and at least one second roller located on the other side of the plane of transportation.

Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection, on the basis that the feature is clearly recited in the claims, is hereby respectfully requested. This feature, in consideration of the Applicant's arguments distinguishing the cited references, supports the patentability of the Applicant's claimed invention over the cited art. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Eriksson (U.S. 3,945,413). This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed and reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection is hereby respectfully requested.

Applicant's invention is not anticipated by nor is it taught or suggested by Eriksson. Applicant has amended independent claims 1, 14 and 17 to more particularly articulate the invention. Applicant claims a first roller on one side of the plane of transportation and a second roller on the other side of the plane of transportation. The Examiner relies on Eriksson. However, as pointed out in Applicant's previous response, Eriksson's rollers shown in Fig. 2 are all disposed on the same side of the plane of transportation. The elevations to which the Examiner refers in Eriksson appear to comprise the wood feeding and gripping elements shown

in Fig. 3. Though the Examiner refers to Fig. 2 and cites it to show elevations on a first pair of rollers on one side of the plane of transportation being staggered relative to elevations provided on the second roller of the pair on the other side of the plane of transportation, Fig. 2 of Eriksson does not show that. In fact, Fig. 2 is a top view, and, as further illustrated in Fig. 3 of Eriksson, what is shown above the feeding device is one or more rotatable pressure and feeding rolls (34) to assist in the feeding as well as to press the objects against the rolls of the feeding device. Thus Applicant believes that the reference in the Office Action to the elevations on a first roller of a pair of rollers located on one side of the plane of transportation being staggered relative to the elevations provided on the second roll of the pair of rollers on the other side of the plane of transportation is not taught or disclosed in Fig. 2 of Eriksson.

Even given the assumption that Fig. 3 of Eriksson would show a pair of rollers, the elevations on the first roller are not staggered in relation to any second roller (34). Accordingly, on page 5 of the Office Action the Examiner contends that the rollers of Eriksson have at least one elevation encircling the rollers. This does not appear to be the case, since the Eriksson roller (34) would appear to have elevations which do not encircle but rather span a transverse direction of the roller (34). Therefore, the elevations of Eriksson would not teach, suggest or disclose what the Applicant discloses and claims as its invention.

The failure of Eriksson to teach, suggest or disclose the Applicant's presently claimed invention is even further demonstrated when it is considered that the arrangement shown in Fig. 3 of Eriksson is a feeding device for feeding objects of wood using toothing or knurling. This is just the opposite effect of what the

Applicant's invention attempts to achieve, namely conveying flat workpieces without damaging the circuit traces.

For the reasons previously set forth in support of the patentability of Applicant's claimed invention over Eriksson, and for the reasons set forth above, Applicant submits that Eriksson does not teach, suggest or disclose the Applicant's present invention. Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection is hereby respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lehtinen (4,530,383). This rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed and reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection are hereby respectfully requested.

The Examiner contends that Lehtinen discloses the present invention. This is not the case. The Examiner cites Lehtinen for its alleged disclosure of a pair of rollers where one roller of the pair of rollers is disposed on one side and the other pair of rollers is disposed on the other of a plane of transportation. In Lehtinen, the growing substrate is fed along arrow 1 and is thus considered to be fed in a plane of transportation. The pin elements 3 project radially from the roller face. However, Lehtinen does not disclose elevations encircling the rollers, but rather, spikes protruding therefrom. In accordance with the Applicant's invention, the claimed elevations encircle the Applicant's rollers, and do not, as Lehtinen shows, contain spikes positioned on locations on the roller which protrude radially. The Lehtinen spikes do not encircle the roller. Rather, each of the spikes disclosed in Lehtinen is mounted at one end and has a free end at its other end. Similarly, as stated with respect

to Eriksson, Lehtinen can no more disclose Applicant's claimed invention featuring encircling elevations of a pair of rollers and the staggering that Applicant recites in claims 1, 14 and 17. For these reasons the present invention should be patentable over Lehtinen, and the rejection withdrawn.

For the above reasons, and for these additional reasons, Claim 5 is distinguishable over Eriksson, and should be patentable. Claim 5 recites features of providing at least one bordering elevation at the ends of the rollers, said bordering elevation annularly encircling the respective one of the rollers and that said bordering elevations are disposed on the rollers of the pair of rollers so as to face each other.

The Examiner appears to refer to the discs (28) of Fig. 2 of Eriksson, from which to argue that the Applicant's recited invention is disclosed or taught. However, as Fig. 2 of Eriksson appears to disclose, there are discs (28) only on alternate rollers, (the rollers (22, 23, 24) having members (2), but not on the rollers (25, 26, 27) which have members (7)). Hence, the apparatus shown in Fig. 2 of Eriksson, unlike Applicant's invention, does not disclose that the discs (28) are disposed on the rollers of a pair of rollers so as to face each other. Thus Eriksson does not disclose the Applicant's present invention.

In addition, according to the Applicant's invention, the bordering elevations of adjacent rollers of a pair of rollers prevent the staggered elevations of one roller of a pair of rollers from projecting too much into the respective spacing between the elevation of the other roller and vice versa. The bordering elevations thus serve to adjust the relative positions of the rollers of a pair of rollers to each other, since the bordering elevations roll on each other. Unlike the Applicant's invention, the discs

(28) on the rollers of Eriksson, however, will not be able to roll on each other and will hence not be able to prevent the elevations of one roller to project into the spacing between the elevations of the other roller and to serve the adjustment of the relative positions of the rollers of a pair of rollers to each other.

For the reasons, as well as for the above reasons pointing out why the rollers disclosed in Eriksson do not even disclose or suggest the Applicant's encircling rollers, again, Eriksson fails to anticipate or render obvious the Applicant's invention as articulated in claim 5.

Claim 5 of the Applicant's invention, includes the feature of elevations on one roller of a pair of rollers which are disposed to be staggered relative to the elevations on the other roller of a pair of rollers. Applicant's invention has important distinctions which may be appreciated, as follows. In order to have the locations of the elevations of one roller of a pair of rollers be fixed relative to the location of the elevations on the other rollers of a pair of rollers, it is necessary to adjust the clearance between the roller pairs. If the clearance is set to a particular spacing, a flexible workpiece traveling in a plane of transportation between the rollers of a pair of rollers may be contacted by the elevations in such a way that this workpiece will more or less be bent by the elevations. In other words, if, for example, the clearance between the rollers of a pair of rollers is adjusted to be small, the elevations of one of the pair of rollers may project into the spacings between elevations of a respective facing roller. In this example the flexible workpieces may be bent much more than when the clearance between the rollers is adjusted to be large. Applicant's invention enables the clearance set between the rollers of a pair of rollers to be adjusted by setting the diameter of the

bordering elevations of the two rollers. The bordering elevations, as claimed, face each other and hence contact each other such that the rollers or the pair of rollers may roll upon each other. If, for example, the diameter of the bordering elevations is large, the clearance between the two rollers may be large, too. If, on the other hand, the diameter of the bordering elevations is small, the clearance between the two rollers may be small, too. Thus by providing bordering elevations of the two rollers of a pair of rollers that face each other, Applicant's invention enables setting a clearance between these rollers, and accordingly, facilitating control of the degree of bending of the flexible workpieces conveyed between the rollers. Accordingly, Applicant's invention is not taught, suggested or disclosed by the cited references relied upon by the Examiner, namely Eriksson or Lehtinen. Claim 5 of the invention presents, in addition to the novel features of claim 1, these additional features of the bordering elevations. Reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection with respect to claim 5 is hereby respectfully requested.

Claims 18 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eriksson in view of U.S. 4,765,273 (Anderle). For the same reasons set forth above distinguishing Eriksson, this rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed and reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection are hereby respectfully requested.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eriksson in view of Lehtinen. For the same reasons set forth above distinguishing Eriksson and Lehtinen, this rejection is respectfully but strenuously traversed and reconsideration and a withdrawal of the rejection are hereby respectfully requested.

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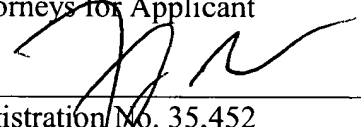
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CONCLUSION

Applicant's invention is believed to be patentable in that the pending claims overcome the rejections set forth by the Examiner. If further matters remain in connection with this case, the Examiner is invited to telephone the Applicant's undersigned representative to resolve them.

If an extension of time is required, one is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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